

Pastor Mark Mikels

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“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Identification Stage’

“HE’S THE ONE WHO POSSESSES THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.”

(John 6:66-68; John 14:6; John 10:7-10; Acts 4:12)

Intro ... As we begin our message this morning, as we continue to build upon what we have discovered so far, let’s remind ourselves of where we have been and why we have engaged in the study we have.

A bit more than a month ago now, I shared with you the **Two Key Concepts** that underlie this series of messages ...

KEY SERIES CONCEPT ONE:

Becoming Christ’s **MIRROR IMAGE**
is **EVERY** believers **CALLING**.

In a word, that is what Jesus Christ desires of each us – to become truly Christian – ‘little Christ’s’ as it were – to allow Him to once again reach out to the lost and needy souls in this world in physical, visible ways – to allow the heart of God to be seen in the midst of this fallen world once again.

However we will never become ‘Like Christ’ by simply saying,
“I’m going to be like Jesus today”.

There’s still too much of the old nature in us; there’s still too much of the world’s system of thought molding us; there’s still too much of the Devil’s influence upon us and even more important than those realities, there’s still way too big a gap in our understanding of the Person of Christ for us to have a truly ‘clear’ picture of what it is that we are ‘trying to become’.

We need some divine assistance if we are to heed this Call of Christ. And so we come to the second of those two key concepts ...

KEY SERIES CONCEPT TWO:

TRANSFORMING us into Christ’s Mirror Image is ‘Pneuma’s
PASSION and **PURPOSE**.

‘Pneuma’ was sent into this world and into the hearts of every born-again believer to carry out the desires of the Father and the Son.

His is the task of multiplying those 'Mirror Images' in this fallen, darkened world.

Stage One in that task we have called 'The IDENTIFICATION Stage' ...

Here is the **Key Question** that must be answered by all who would eventually become one of those "**Mirror Images of Christ**".

KEY QUESTION IN THIS IDENTIFICATION STAGE ...

"**WHO** is He and **HOW** does that **RELATE** to me?"

That's the question that the people of Jesus' Day raised whenever they encountered him either personally or through the testimony of those who had.

Over the past several weeks we have been discovering that the answer to that question is both profound and broad – it touches upon the most important issues of human life and it challenges everything in our life. No one can truly encounter Jesus Christ and remain unchanged.

Each part of the answer to that key question is a 'Revelation from God' in its own right. So far we have identified three such 'Revelations' ...

REVELATION ONE ...

"Jesus is the One who **KNOWS** all about me - the One before Whom my **LIFE** is laid bare – He is the One who will one day call me into **ACCOUNT**."

REVELATION TWO ...

"Jesus is the One who can **FORGIVE** me for all my **SINS**.
He offers me a **FRESH START**."

REVELATION THREE ...

"Jesus is the One who can **SATISFY** my spiritual **HUNGER** and **THIRST**.
He will **NOURISH** me with **SPIRITUAL** food."

Each of these messages provides awesome insights into the Person of Jesus Christ – the one who we are to 'mirror'. Each of them calls for us to embrace this Jesus and yield ourselves to His Calling upon our lives.

Here now is ...

TODAY'S KEY REVELATION ...

*"Jesus is the One who possesses the **WORDS** of eternal **LIFE**.
He opens the **DOOR** of **SALVATION** to me."
(John 6: 66-68; John 14:6; John 10:7-10)*

Words are powerful things – words can stir the heart – words can fire up one's imagination – words can open doors of opportunity – words can draw people together in life-long bonds.

On this very special day – this Valentine's Day – millions of cards have been purchased and presented based upon their 'words'. Linda gave me one this morning that will go in my collection of cherished possessions.

Jesus, we declare this morning, is the One who
'Possesses the Words of Eternal Life'.

Did you know that there are 'words' like that – words that can not only put a smile on your face and joy in your heart but eternal life in your soul?

Let's walk our way through a few of them found in ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...

1. "**LORD**, to whom shall we **GO**?
YOU (alone) have the **WORDS** of eternal **LIFE**."
(John 6:68)

Peter was the one whom the Holy Spirit enabled to draw this wondrous conclusion. And it was drawn in a moment of distress and discouragement. It came right after the unthinkable had happened.

The crowds who had gathered around Jesus by the thousands – the ones who had relished seeing his miracles of healing and who had even been miraculously fed by his hand - had turned against him.

They could accept the benefits that came of hanging around him but they struggled to accept his teaching – especially Him saying that he was the 'living bread that came down from heaven' and that they would somehow have to 'eat his flesh and drink his blood' whatever that meant. *Instead of waiting for clarification*, many of them simply 'turned away'.

Jesus then turned to His chosen twelve and said ...

"You do not want to leave me too, do you?"

It was in answer to that question that Peter gave that 'Spirit-Inspired Response'.

*"Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of Eternal Life."*

(and then he added)

"We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

He could have easily added ...

'Lord, we surely don't understand everything that you say but we know that someday we surely will and we know and believe that these things you say open the door of salvation to us. We are sticking with you.'

Is that the attitude of your heart this morning – Do you know and believe that Jesus Christ is the Holy One of God and that He possesses the words of eternal life and that he opens to door of salvation to you?

Are you ready to hear some of those words ... some more of those words that have caused many people over the years to 'turn from Christ' and to even 'heap abuse upon His People'?

How about these words recorded in John's Gospel chapter 14 verse 6 ...

**2. "I am the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE.
No one comes to the FATHER except THROUGH me."
(John 14:6)**

No doubt about it ... Jesus was saying that there was only one door into the Father's Eternal Presence and that door had his name on it. Keep in mind that Jesus said these words to an audience that was almost completely Jewish.

These were people who would have believed that it 'Abraham' was name inscribed on that door – "We are Abraham's children" they would say to Jesus on more than one occasion. 'We, by heritage and long-standing promise, have access into that Eternal Realm. How dare you put yourself in Abraham's Place?'

These were the 'Words' from Jesus that eventually caused the Leaders of the Jews to condemn him to death as a blasphemer.

They were not willing to wait for any further clarification from him – they were not willing to 'suspend their own conclusions' for even a moment.

But Peter and the others received and believed these words (whether they fully understood them or not) to be 'Words of Eternal Life' spoken by the Holy One Himself!

Those words built upon these that Jesus had spoken a little bit earlier in his ministry. They are recorded in John chapter 10 verses 9 and 10 ...

3. "I am the **GATE**; whoever enters **THROUGH** me will be **SAVED**.
He will come in and out and find **PASTURE** ...
I have come that they might have **LIFE** and have it to the **FULL**."
(John 10:9-10)

Now there are some 'words' that convey some concrete images ...

A '**Gate**' leading into security and salvation –
A '**Pasture**' providing nourishment for daily needs–
A '**Life**' of genuine abundance.

Those are words whose full meaning Jesus' true disciples definitely wanted to pursue – they seemed to focus upon this life – they did not yet offend or divide. They were preliminary words. But they were pregnant with possibilities.

I could have (and perhaps should have) switched the order of these two passages but I wanted us to feel the impact of Jesus' John 14:6 pronouncement first.

I wanted us to see and feel the impact upon the people – the difficulty of them 'accepting by faith' what Jesus had said regarding heavenly life even though they had eagerly embraced what he had said regarding earthly life.

The one came across as 'wonderful' the other came across as 'heretical'.

And once that seemingly 'heretical statement' had been made, it became the center of everything. That was the very thing that the Apostle Peter zeroed in on when he was arrested and then called before the Jewish Authorities and asked to give an explanation of a miracle of healing he had performed.

Here's his concluding statement before them recorded in Acts 4:12 ...

4. "**SALVATION** is found in no one else, for there is **NO OTHER NAME** under heaven given to men by which we must be **SAVED**."
(Acts 4:12)

There you have it. The very Peter who, in a burst of insight, had months before said to the Lord Jesus ... "You have the words of eternal life" ... is now passing on these words to the leadership of his nation – the guardians of his ancient faith.

"Salvation is found in no one else."

Oh, how much more Peter knew on this day than he had known on that earlier day.

He had heard Christ say during that last Supper -*"This is my body which is given for you."*

He had then seen Christ's body literally 'given' on the cross.

He had seen His Savior risen from the dead and

He had received the Spirit His Savior had sent.

He had entered through the gate; he had been saved – he had found pasture;

He was experiencing the abundancy that Jesus had spoken of.

He spoke to them not only by faith but also by sight. He had begun to experience the things that he had previously accepted completely by faith.

He includes them – He pleads with them ...

*"There is no other name (not Abraham/not Moses/ not David/ not Isaiah)
by which we (you and I) must be saved."*

I have no doubt that there were some in that room, sitting in that Assembly of Leaders, who heeded those 'Words of Eternal Life' being passed on by one of Christ's Own.

Just two chapters later in the Book of Acts, it is reported that ...

*"A large number of priests became obedient to the faith"
(Acts 6:7)*

So now we come to and conclude with ...

TODAY'S KEY INSIGHT ...

*Life takes a decidedly **NARROW** and **CHALLENGING** turn once Jesus is identified as an **EXCLUSIVE SAVIOR** – as the **ONLY WAY** – as man's **ONLY CHANCE** of Eternal Life.*

That's once again (just like it was in the First Century) one of the biggest challenges to the true 'Follower of Christ' – it runs contrary to the 'spirit of the age' – it's not 'politically correct' - it runs contrary to the teachings of 'other faiths' – it's used to brand true 'Followers of Christ' as haters and fanatics and causes them to be marginalized but, as today's **final thot** puts it, the undeniable truth is ...

Final Thot ...

If '**NO OTHER WAY**' really means '**NO OTHER WAY**'
then there really is '**NO OTHER WAY**'.

It's **JESUS** or **NOTHING!**